



News Release

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Free child seat inspections provided statewide

Child Passenger Safety Week is February 8-14

OLYMPIA — We want what's best for our kids, especially when their health and safety is involved. During Child Passenger Safety Week, the Washington State Department of Health in collaboration with local SAFE KIDS Coalitions are hosting events statewide to ensure your child's safety seat is properly installed and safe to ride in.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children ages 14 and younger. Among Washington children 14 and younger, about 25 die, 140 are hospitalized, and 5,300 children visit an emergency department each year due to motor vehicle crashes. At locations across the state, SAFE KIDS BUCKLE UP® technicians will check child safety seats free of charge for age and size appropriateness, proper installation and use, recall or visible damage.

"It's important to look for ways to keep children safe," said Mary Borges, Washington State SAFE KIDS Coordinator. "This is one thing we can do to ensure our children are properly protected in motor vehicles."

Washington was the first state in the nation to pass a child booster seat law in 2000. The law's requirements are an effective way to ensure your child's safety:

- Babies must ride facing the rear of the vehicle until 1 year of age or 20 pounds.
- Children 1-4 years or 20-40 pounds must ride facing the front of the vehicle.
- Children 4-6 years or 40-60 pounds must ride in a booster seat.
- All children under the age of 12 must ride in the rear seat.

The Department of Health's [Injury Prevention Web site](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/injury/) (www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/injury/) has information on child seat inspections near you, or call the toll-free hotline at (800) 441-1888.

The Washington State SAFE KIDS Coalitions are part of the [National SAFE KIDS Campaign](http://www.safekids.org/) (www.safekids.org/), the first and only national nonprofit organization dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional childhood injury — the number one killer of children ages 14 and under. Three hundred state and local SAFE KIDS coalitions in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico comprise the Campaign.

SAFE KIDS BUCKLE UP® is a national program developed by the National SAFE KIDS Campaign and sponsored by the General Motors Corporation to educate parents and caregivers about the importance of properly restraining children on every ride.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at http://www.doh.wa.gov for a <i>healthy dose of information</i> .
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